THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) to (f) Yes, Sir. The main recommendation of the Committee was to register a non-profit society for looking after all aspects related to information security in the country. On the basis of that recommendation, the Society for Electronic Transaction and Security (SETS) was registered with the Registrar of Societies, Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Delhi, under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 on the 22nd of May, 2002.

Telephone Arrears of BSNL

1561. SHRI R.S. GAVAI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. has drawn a strategy to recover its arrears amounting to over Rupees Four thousand crores across the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the BSNL has adopted any measures to recover the dues from the subscribers in the past; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) The issue of telephone bills and recovery thereof is a continuous process. While facilities are provided to subscribers to promptly pay their telephone bills, some of them fail to do so in time. Thus, after each billing cycle the cumulative amount of arrears tends to go up. The amount of (over-three-months-old) arrears of telephone revenue as on 31.12.2002 is Rs. 2655 crores. The strategy of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited for realization of its telephone dues includes

telephonic reminders to subscribers who do not pay their bills by the "pay-by date", initial disconnection of the facility for outgoing calls followed by final disconnection, issue of registered notices, disconnection of other working telephones of the subscribers, adjustment of deposits, and finally legal action in justified cases.

(c) and (d) BSNL has been following the above-mentioned measures on a regular basis to recover its dues from subscribers. Some amount, however, remains outstanding due to various reasons, including disputes, litigation and deliberate defaults by some subscribers. Its efforts have, however, been able to ensure that over 91% of the bills issued during a month are generally realized by the end of the second following month.

ISD Call Racket

1562. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "ISD call rackets thrive in capital" as reported in the 'Statesman' dated the 31st December, 2002;

(b) if so, whether MTNL and VSNL have been losing crores of rupees per month on such call rackets;

(c) if so, whether MTNL and VSNL are not having any foolproof system to check such rackets;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the plans formulated to check such rackets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, Many ISD call rackets have been detected through surveillance or source information. But it has not been possible to exactly estimate this loss.

(c) and (d) These rackets are run through illegal long distance channel and are difficult to be monitored. The rackets are detected through surveillance or source information. The monitoring has become more difficult with the multi-operator regime.